

Fuel 4 Women



KSC/CCAFS HEALTH EDUCATION AND WELLNESS PROGRAM

Skin Care April 2006

INTRODUCTION

The importance of keeping your skin healthy can't be overemphasized. It's the body's first defense against disease and infection, and it protects your internal organs from injuries. It is, in fact, the largest organ in the body. The skin helps regulate body temperature and prevents excess fluid loss, and it also helps your body remove excess water and salt.

Skin conditions can affect anyone—young and old, men and women. Acne, psoriasis and eczema are just a few examples of common skin disorders. The good news is that there are a number of simple ways to keep skin healthy, and there also are now many options available to treat skin conditions, if treatment is necessary.

If you think you may have a skin problem, or need to learn how to better care for your skin, consultation with a dermatologist—a physician who specializes in treating the skin and keeping it healthy—may be in order. Skin problems can be difficult to diagnose because many skin conditions share similar symptoms. An evaluation is key to effective treatment.

WHAT IS YOUR SKIN TYPE?

From superfair to superdark, your skin type helps determine the likelihood you will burn when exposed to the sun. According to the American Academy of Dermatology, there are six skin types. Which one are you?

Type I. You always burn easily, never tan and your skin is extremely sensitive to the sun. You are most likely a red-head, have freckles, and are of Celtic or Scotch-Irish descent.

Type II. You always burn easily, you tan minimally, and your skin is very sensitive to the sun. You're most likely fair-skinned, fair-haired, blue-eyed and White.

Type III. You sometimes burn, you tan gradually to a light brown, and your skin is sensitive to the sun. Your skin is considered average.

Type IV. You burn minimally, always tan to a moderate brown and your skin is minimally sensitive to the sun. You're most likely of Mediterranean descent or White.

Type V. You rarely burn, you tan well and your skin isn't sensitive to the sun. You're most likely of Middle Eastern descent or you may be Hispanic or Black.

Type VI. You never burn, your skin is deeply pigmented and it isn't sensitive to the sun. You're most likely Black.

PLAYING IT SAFE IN THE SUN

From celebrities to Floridians, many people seem to desire a golden brown tan. To many, the golden brown tan is beautiful, but the golden brown tan actually means that you have burned your skin. By doing that repeatedly, it results in wrinkled, spotted, leathery skin or worse—skin cancer. It is important to protect your skin from the sun.

- Limit your time in the sun. Avoid the sun when it is at its strongest, usually between 10 am to 4 pm. Be aware that ultraviolet (UV) sunlight reflected from water, sand, snow, and cement can be as intense as direct sunlight. Clouds can block brightness, but may allow up to 80% of UV light to reach your skin.
- Wear protective clothing and sunglasses. Long-sleeved cotton shirts and hats with at least a 4-inch brim offer good protection against the sun. Choose sunglasses that have at least 99% protection against UVA and UVB sunlight.
- Use sunscreen. Choose a sunscreen that has a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher, and use it even on cloudy days. Look for moisturizers and makeup products that contain non-greasy sunscreens so that you can be protected every day, including workdays.
- Ask your doctor about medications you take. Many drugs can increase your sensitivity to sunlight and your risk of getting a sunburn.

QUICK FACTS

- Cancer of the skin is the most common of all cancers, probably accounting for more than 50% of all cancers.
- Melanoma tends to occur at a younger age than most cancers. Half of all melanomas are found in people under age 57.
- About 1 of every 30,000 girls aged 15 to 19 will develop melanoma. For boys of this age, the rate is about 1 of every 15,000.



THE **ABCDs** OF SPOTTING MELANOMA

Melanoma can develop anywhere on your body, even areas that have never seen a ray of sunshine. There are four components that need to be evaluated when looking at moles. They are known as the ABCDs of melanoma.

Asymmetry. One-half of the mole doesn't match the other half.

Border irregularity. The edges are often ragged, notched, blurred or irregular and the pigment may spread into the surrounding skin.

Color. The mole may have shades of black, brown and tan, or you may see areas of white, gray, red, pink or blue.

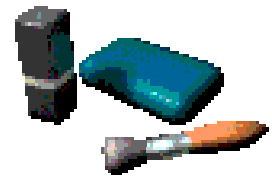
Diameter. Melanomas are typically larger than a pencil eraser, although early melanomas may be smaller.

Other warning signs include changes in the surface of a mole; scaliness, oozing, bleeding or the appearance of a bump; spread of pigment from the border into the surrounding skin, and change in sensation such as itchiness, tenderness or pain.

COSMETICS: THE TRUTH BEHIND THE TERMINOLOGY

Natural. Implies that ingredients are extracted directly from plants or animal products as opposed to being produced synthetically. There are no federal standards regulating the term. Products may still contain synthetically produced substances. Natural doesn't necessarily mean pure, clean or hypoallergenic.

Hypoallergenic. Implies that the product is less likely than others to cause an allergic reaction, because it contains little or no fragrance and has fewer preservatives. But there aren't any scientific studies required to substantiate this claim. Likewise, terms such as *dermatology-tested*, *sensitivity-tested*, *allergy-tested*, or *nonirritating*, carry no guarantee that they won't cause skin reactions.



Alcohol-free. Means that certain cosmetic products do not contain ethyl alcohol (grain alcohol). However, they may contain other alcohols, such as cetyl, stearyl, cetostearyl or lanolin, which are known as fatty alcohols.

Unscented or fragrance-free. Implies that a cosmetic product has no perceptible odor. Fragrance ingredients may be added to an unscented cosmetic to mask any offensive odor from the raw material used, but in a smaller amount than is needed to impart a noticeable scent. If any fragrance is used, the label should say so.

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- ♦ *Educating women about their health*
- ♦ *Encouraging women to act against disease*

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RESOURCES

National Women's Health Resource Center

www.healthywomen.org

American Cancer Society

www.cancer.org